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PHILOSOPHICAL REVERIES.

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I.

OF THE INEVITABLE GENERALLY.

I call these *reveries*, rather than conclusions or any other decisive name, not as holding that modesty offers any special promise of merit—much less as imitating the caution of the ostrich that hides its head in the sand, and leaves its body as obtrusive as ever—but rather as considering the fate by my own judgment of my own confident expression heretofore, and also the quasi shortcoming of all other philosophers in leaving to this late day anything at all worth saying. Gladly I would side with Nicias in the position that courage is due to knowledge, had not experience proved, in my own case, that a false conceit of knowledge may be as bold as knowledge itself; for boldness has an immediate charm of its own, whether in good or ill. We enjoy the effrontery of Falstaff, in his boast of being witty in himself and a cause that wit was in other men; and we cheer bravely those Dioscuri of old who stood in the streets of Athens and engaged themselves to outwit all comers; for whatever may be said of modesty—which is not much, save as modesty may be due to cir-

cumspection—courage is by far the more charming quality of the two. Furthermore, it is ever the egoism of any exploit that gives it human interest. The man with a gift—the lightning calculator, the boy preacher, the phenomenal medium generally—gets no love. But unfortunately for the true and lasting fame of the immediate courage instanced here, time has turned the ground of it into comparative negation; and although the best of men, speaking not by the card, may still be undone by equivocation, it is safe saying those “men of Thuri” were not so knowing of all things as they esteemed themselves. Their circle met, and was true, but it was comparatively small. And when one has himself written much to be sorry for, and over many long-fondled conclusions has scored a common epitaph—*Too soon at last*—he may well doubt that immediacy and true judgment dwell together. When, too, he remembers the many philosophical circles which in their days seemed coincident with the utmost horizon of thought, but which have been since transcended, stone after stone having been venturously cast into the mist beyond, until the once-unknown has become a common causeway, with depots of supply for excursions not dreamed of then, he should perceive that philosophy has been growing as a whole, and if not precisely in the order of time, yet eventually transcending itself. While the name, then, and even the manner, may be somewhat indifferent, the consciousness attending any work may have importance. Instinct and mere habit can hardly prompt good manner, while nakedness and filth may become sacred through self-consciousness and necessity. I have heard a gentleman speaking beautifully of manners while eating cabbage with his fingers in place of a fork. Let us say, then, of him who would perform before the world, we admire the spring and confidence which survive the contemplation of his own and others’ errors; and so he shall first salute the high gods, let him bang away with all his might.

One other careful consideration deprecates too strong a rubric over the matter herein. A part of it has appeared in newspaper articles and otherwise, which, in its present articulation, may lack the coherence of a piece wrought out at a single heat. Those articles falling under the eye of the editor of this JOURNAL occasioned the alternative of either seeing some of them copied as they first appeared, or forming them with other matter into a discourse

of some order; to the adoption of the hither horn of that dilemma the generous patrons of the JOURNAL will attribute the present infliction. Still, as far as possible to claim the mercy due to newspaper material from the classic leisure of quarterly criticism, I retain the popular introduction after which parts of it first appeared.

To the Editor of the ———.

SIR: In a recent interview, which is remembered with pleasure, you questioned the feasibility of putting Hegel's first principle into popular apprehension. How if now, while the cabinet timber is seasoning, and the Governor is wistfully searching for the genius which the politicians have boasted in their respective leaders (not one in fifty of whom ever did a generous thing or ever uttered a wise one), we turn to the philosophical arena, where prestige and pretension are vain—where hard blows alone may determine the championship, and where criticism is forced to participate under the Spartan regulation, "strip, or depart"—and learn, if we may, whether from Hegel or some other, or out of our own soul, the inevitable.

Firstly, let us have a few words as to philosophy in its popular relations. People err in esteeming philosophy a long-haired specialty, rather than a criticism of all that is popularly known. There is no man of any note in this connection who does not know about all the quotable literature in the world, and who has not long survived that prejudice of "common sense" which pronounces the metaphysician a crank. What makes high thought seem eccentric to the masses is their disposition to be satisfied so far short of radical explanation: they refer all things finally to law, or to force, or to designing mind, or to divine power, or to some other generality which is not apprehended as explanatory, but is a mere limbus wherein they dump the problem. The philosophic spirit must enter into the meaning and force of law, and divine power, etc., and must realize in himself the reason and the genius of being. But when the natural man hears the philosopher attributing to rational principles certain results which common sense refers to persons he is vexed; he is disposed to say, reverently as he feels, that God made the world; the philosopher is apt to say that the reason of things is reason. The latter may be only

interpreting the words of the former, who, in referring things to God, is prompted by the consciousness of a producing power in himself; man does some things, and therefore it seems relevant to him to say God does certain other things. But though a man had himself made all things, he would not, on that account merely, be capable of answering the questions which a philosopher might ask him.

Much to the disadvantage of men who are still in the natural way of thinking, philosophy is a life or an occupation so intent on its own pursuits that few of its participants have any leisure in which they may turn back and assist the uninitiated over those obstructions which they had long ago surmounted and have since despised. It is said of those explorers toward the pole that he who once enters the Arctic dream can never again follow with his former interest the temperate vocations of his race; for evermore the loadstone draws him, and evermore his fancy kindles the opaline splendors of the eternal ice. So he who has once entered beyond the sensuous limits of reality, and has seen that the cause of things cannot be another thing—for that were but one more added to the list of things to be accounted for—can never again acknowledge the gleam of the highest genius in any eye that beholds not the eternal verities. Evermore for him are the larger sanity and the surer fixity of the far stars which have no orbits in the reckoning of this world. The pole must be there—the world must be rational; not rationally may either assumption be ignored; and all subordinate interests and dignities which claim to defer the worth of these our studies are themselves eccentric—far out from the agonism which embroils the heavier metal in the crucible of truth.

But latterly there has been a movement, a breaking up of the ice on which the explorers have been wont to travel and to rely as permanent. This shifting has brought about a collision of insights, which we may hope after a while to explicate; and it has given occasion for a new departure, which the circumstances may indicate in due time. Especially since 1880 philosophy has been strongly agitated. Since then the vast and imposing fane which for a hundred years had dominated the fields of thought, and in which philosophy with bated breath had uttered the name of Immanuel Kant, has trembled to the armored tread of James

Hutchinson Stirling. Mr. Harris, of the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy," now sees the solution of all in the Trinity. The London thinkers are shifting all cause into a postulate of comprehensibility. At the same time my brochure, "Anæsthetic Revelation" (1874), despite its many errors, is calling peremptorily for trial through voices more commanding than my own. The twenty volumes of Hegel have adduced doubtless twenty hundred more of dispute, criticism, and explanation, which leave us still in doubt as to how far his true interpretation is extant. There have been some who charged that he intended rather to astonish than to be understood—a difference of little importance to us, who must understand for ourselves. Indeed, aside from Hegel's obscurity of claim, the philosophers are few who have come so close to the people as to declare: This is the question, and this is the answer; but of Hegel especially it may be well said that he philosophized for a conclusion which he never expressed. That he was pervaded by the great truth cannot be doubted; the eyes of the world, if not directly on him, are set toward the region which he occupied. Though he may not be the last of philosophers, pull him out and all the rest will be drawn into his vacancy. Yet something about him must be wrong while his results are so confessedly questionable; and after the quotation of two or three of his prefatory sentences we shall go our own way:

"The only thing essentially necessary to an insight of the method of scientific evolution is a knowledge of the logical nature of the negative: that it is positive in its results." "Its self-contradiction does not result in zero, or the abstract nothing, but rather in the negation of its special content only." "In the result is contained essentially that from which it resulted."

We are at once in the midst of philosophy, and very near to the vortex of it, when we say: It is no accident—this omission by philosophers of a direct statement of philosophy as a question and its answer. A definition of philosophy would be apt to make an end of it. The difficulty is in the question rather than in the answer. A question of thought well put infers its own answer. Herein lay the trick of Socrates in forcing a geometrical demonstration from the mouth of Meno's slave; the answer is inevitable if the question is free from sensuous content. When you ask con-

cerning any sensuous thing, What is it? the answer requires some transference or accordance of the sensuous to the intelligible; but whatever content is in thought is the same whether as question or answer, assertion or negation. Here shows an immense difference of thought and things. And before you come to things at all, in the way of explanation, you are arrested by thought as to the being of things. What are they? seems an original and exhaustive question until we observe that it were still more original with the "what" cut off. Said Heraclitus, "Strife is the father of things;" but if things get being from strife, what is this which they get? What do we mean by *is*? We answer:

Is means the immediate presence and direct assertion, whether of thought or things, and involves much or little according to the culture of the knower. To the naïve intellect, only that is which is capable of conception in form or limit as against a background. The thinker, perceiving that the limit or background is essential in the thing, and so a part of it, makes the *is* with which the thing is asserted include essentially that which within the limit is not. So far as a thing immediately is, as within limit, if you take away that which is not, nothing can immediately be. When I say "I am," I initiate a meaning which that phrase does not wholly signalize; it is a part of a sentence, of which the remainder is, "I am not." The *is* of naïve or immediate being has the better of non-being (which may have content of its own) only through immediate attention. There can be no thought of such being—it has no limit or definition in thought, apart from non-being. The very definition of such being—the outline which makes it one, is not-being. How shall a man know he is alive—since in thought the knowing of it constitutes the being alive—without distinguishing in thought the opposite of life, and knowing as well one as the other, and, so far as being is in knowing, being one as well as the other? The one limits and defines the other as no other can limit or define it; they are, therefore, as in pure thought, not only inseparable but convertible; either would be the other in the same position—for the position is all and the content nothing. There is as yet no question of content—of *what* is or has being—but only of being itself. Hence arose that paradox of immediate truth, "being and not-being are the same." This notion is very old. "Being is by nothing more real than not-being."

Our attitude of thought here, old though it be, is not as yet thoroughly conventional, and its difficulty is exaggerated in the want of set expressions for duplicity in unity, and the transcendency of synthetic or total thought. The natural man says of anything, It is, or It is not, etc.; and we, when making a topic of his assertion (as the *is*), ordinarily use the same *is* over again, regardless of the transcendency of the assertion which we intend—the method involved in it. To say non-being is this or that, or to say being is this or that, is to misstate a part as a whole; both together comprise (here the conventional word is needed) this mystery, or puzzle, or problem, which detains us, and which we usually express by the term *being* alone. We use the word *life* also with the same intention, as if death were the absolute other or opposite of it, whereas he who has not perceived that life and death are equal, and halves of this (the word lacking—the duplex mystery), has not yet divined the Heraclitic principle. So when we speak of *all*, the totality, we quantify the all; it is all we know of, omitting the subjective consideration in which the all reposes; and when, upon reflection, we propose to correct our assertion of all so as to include us and our thought, we find a new and transcending person surrounding us, too late to be included; and thus, untrained in method, we fail to objectify, because we propose as an *immediate* object a self-transcending reality which is subject and object at once (whether inherently or in process), and which can be an object only by the light of a scientific method. Even in high philosophical discourse you may find the mystery spoken of in its right meaning, and in the next sentence, perhaps, you will read of the *being* of the mystery, and maybe in the next sentence of the *being* of this *being*, and so confuse the true insight of the very first being as self-transcendent—thought in relation to itself—and in a relation which no repetition can intensify or extend. The being of being of being + forever can mean only the self-thinking transcendency of being—a fact of experience as well as a philosophical necessity, and a fact static enough, although requiring a process to its perception.

The gorge of positive or immediate science rises against no other morsel as it rises against self-relation. “Can a man lift himself by the straps of his boots? Can a serpent take its tail in its mouth and swallow itself? Can a fence be so crooked that he

who climbs over it shall come down on the same side from which he went up?" No; there is no self-relation among things; it is not in the nature of things. But there are realities which are not things; for instance, the relations of things. There can be no self-relation (nor any other relation, as we shall see more clearly further on) without intelligence. "But in self-relation somewhat must either be before it is, or be ideally as in precedence of an according demonstration, or else be as in a process of becoming whereby all reality is given in one common present tense, so that the relation can exist only as one side at a time, whereas, in any explanatory use of them, as self-sufficient, both sides must exist at once." We must here presume a little of idealism:

Self-relation, as a fact or an inference, involves the anomaly of a *state of change*. This were an impossibility among things, and is possible only as energy or activity can be objectified. But, where thought is reality, energy must be essence—substance. And there can be only one example of pure energy, and that the one supreme instance of relation to self involved in knowing with constant reference to being: not as if one first knew, and afterward remembered and reviewed the knowing in a time process, but knowing and being as in one act having analytically two aspects. For the whole of idealism goes to the proof that the object—in this case the self—finds its form and distinction only in the subjective relation, and that the two sides *cannot* succeed one another in a time process. To say You know, and you know you know, is to add nothing in the last clause; it is as idle as to say You lie, and you know you lie; for as it is self-consciousness which distinguishes a lie from a mere misstatement, so it is self-reference which distinguishes living knowledge from the reflection of a mirror.

But this transcendency, or "dialectic," or whatsoever it may be named, is not to be used as explaining time, nor things in the process of time; it is true only in pure thought, as general—thought of itself. When Heraclitus says "Strife is the father of things," he uses a general term which is not to suggest the vulgar inference of a grandfather of things. If you choose to call strife one among other things (which it is not, but rather a relation of things), then strife would infer, as immediate, that infinite womb of inertia and peace in which it shows by contrast; but this were wholly vain, as merely renewing in another particular instance the general prin-

ciple of opposition—the total synthesis—which no new instance can supplement or replace. In this light we see that in the region where energy is essence or substance (real object), an opposition is possible which, attempted among things of conceptual limits, could not appear; and that the time process, which seems necessarily involved in the notion of self-relation, is erroneously shifted thereto by reflection from the process by which we rise from the immediate to the synthetic or pure general, so theorizing a fixed fact which, having two aspects, requires two successive views in order to its being seen both before and behind, or in its immediacy and its ground. While, therefore, a whole of thought has thus the character of a process in circuit, from the immediate or limitedly present around through the subjective element, to the scientific immediate or self-related, we are not to assume that the whole so attained can be taken as thesis of a new or higher synthesis, and so on, with the intention of compiling a knowledge nearer to the absolute than our first. Our process is to a fact; to renew the circuit in any expectancy is to let the fact slide off into a method which is only our method of attaining the fact.

Truly the becoming, or the time process, in which reality seems to the natural man confined to one common present tense for all, does offer to philosophy the temptation of an absolute seemingly in a process rather than in a fixed fact; but the fact (even of process) is the absolute term, and the temptation will pass away in a better understanding of time—which we shall attempt hereafter.

We should here carefully discriminate between pure and sensuous thought. Pure thought is self-relation and nought else; it is thought in the general, awake and aware, with no other topic than being. Assertion as general asserts no particular other than itself; and negation as general denies no particular other than itself as immediately taken—in doing which it appears as a positive force; it does not destroy itself as general, but only its specific topic; and if that topic shall be its immediate self as negative, the general activity still persists and prevails. Now, to perceive how pure thought—thought of itself—differs from thought with another object, or a sensuous content, observe the following: To say that a picture, or any other sensuous thing, is the same as the want of it, were to utter nonsense indeed: there is a difference equivalent to the whole stuff and merit of the picture; but in so far as the pic-

ture can be real in thought—whether fancied or theoretically possessed—its presence and its absence (so far as they are affected by their assertion or their negation) are the same and indifferent. The saving clause in our sentence is “*its* absence.” We do not mean the absence of anything else, nor absence in general; and now how does *its* absence differ from any other absence, or from absence in general? We answer: It differs by containing a complete description of the picture; the hole is as round as the plug; and from thought the picture cannot get away. So non-being does not mean non-conformity, or non-anything else at all, but non-*being*; the negation is specific and descriptive, and preserves in science what it destroys from conception.

Even so the ultimate distinction is not as between the universe of things and nothing; here again is a difference equivalent to the value of all things. The ultimate distinction is pure thought regardless of any topic besides; we are not yet concerned with *what* shall have being otherwise than as being is somewhat in and for itself—an object only transcendently. But our habit of thinking will keep us dragging in somewhat *immediate* to cling to or to illustrate with. All that is, popularly, is as having the better of non-being—ungenerously suppressing the fact that the “better” specifies a like which it betters, and which refutes the better as assumed totality. If all were not—we think that were easy; there were no wonder then—no tax on ingenuity, nothing to account for. This conclusion is from false premises, and is due to fanciful and partial thinking—the thinking which assumes all reality as conceivable and limited—assumes knowledge as an immediate physical light, rather than an ideal distinction involving light and darkness equally. It assumes that if the light were to go out the show would be ended (and so it would), but it forgets the fact that, if the darkness were to go out, that would be equally calamitous. It were bad enough if the master had lost his crayon, but the loss of the blackboard would be alike fatal to the demonstration. Without darkness, light would be unintelligible and useless. Without darkness you could not tell which end of a stick was toward you, nor indeed see it at all. There would be no perspective, no relief, no shade, no form, no color. Universal light were as blind as universal darkness; there could be no distinction in either. Universal thing and universal nothing were

alike indistinguishable. Why, then, assume the positive, the *immediately* affirmative, as alone the ingenious? Is not the mould as shapely as the model? The original ingenuity does not show in bringing light out of darkness, nor in bringing things out of nothing, but in evolving through the just opposition of light and darkness this wondrous picture, in which the black and white lines have equal significance—in evolving from life and death at once the conscious spirit.

It is our habit to think of life as dear, and of death as cheap (although Tithonus found them otherwise), or, continuing the simile of the picture, that paper is cheap while drawing is expensive; but the engraver had a different estimation in one sense, for all his labor was spent on the white ground, while he left untouched those parts of the block which are represented in the lines of the picture. Had the block been limitless, there had been no distinction in the relative cost and value of the two sides of the contrast. If being and non-being are both necessary to the presence of either, neither shall claim priority or preference. Indeed, we may fancy an intelligence which, instead of regarding things as complete entities of themselves, should regard chiefly their background as affected by the holes which things are making in it. Even so the paper-maker, wrapt in his own art, may contemplate your picture as intrusive and impertinent.

It is here to be said, carefully rather than ironically, that by non-being we do not mean nothing; neither do we mean the opposite of abiding, or of becoming—participles rather than aspects of our utmost noun. Non-being as here used is the ground of the immediate or limited—whether, as an ultimate fact, that ground be the rest of the multiplicity of things, or opposition merely, and whether in time or out of time. Now, totality itself may be taken by the naïve intellect as an immediate topic (as what may not be so taken, from a round square to a blue smell?), and to that, of course, the opposite, or non-being, would be pure nothing, void, whether subjective or objective; but such a taking would be erroneous and vain, as assuming that a totality can be immediate in the sense of being all object, whereas it cannot—as the naïve intellect may see when it considers the fact that the knower, taken as other or opposite to an immediate totality (supposing a totality could have an opposite), would still, by the definition, be within

that totality. Clearly, then, the power of grasping or consenting to totality involves the power of thought to make itself its own object—not through direct vision as an eye sees, but by a rational, unavoidable process, whose result may then, in proper terms, be a fact or object of scientific immediacy.

“But would not this hypothetical nothing hold the same relation to the ingenious universe that non-being holds to special things?” No; the first is an impossibility, the last is a necessity. The universe, by definition, must *contain* all opposition; it is not a ball hanging in a vacuum, nor aught for any intelligence in direct view; it is an afterthought even to the gods. The non-being that relieves a thing is in one sense solid stuff; it is all other things. The thing is a whole only as a part of a whole; it is pointedly one, and this one, to the extent and intent of universal otherness. Destroy any other thing, and a part of this thing must vanish, for it could no longer have ground and relief. The curtain beside me, were my ear so fine, would whisper of mines and miners, and looms and fields of mulberry, and of logwood cutters and camp-fires in far-away lands. All these are related to it as it hangs; and if I knew it well I might feel the draught of Uranus in the waving of its folds. What a thing is not is not nothing, but only nothing immediate—it is *not this thing*: the negation is specific, as of all that this thing lacks of totality. As above the region of things, in pure thought of itself, non-being is the subjective element in which thought as immediate reposes; it is the ever-invisible rear of a circular process, in which, as other, it is the same when immediately taken. It is not the opposite of thought, but it is that part of thought which is the ground and opposite of immediate presence—while a whole of thought comprises both immediacy and ground—both form and essence, and, like the universe, has no opposite at all.

Now this position, which originates in Heraclitus, has not remained unchallenged; and the most formidable challenge is, that in it we are all the time presupposing living thought, in the presumed presence of which being and non-being are equally topics and thought-realities—whereas real non-being would vacate the thought which now entertains it as a mere spectre, or hypothesis, and leave utter non-distinction, which is claimed as exemplified in sleep and death.

By what follows, our philosophy must stand or fall. We have shown that the popular wonder which asks Why is—? has mistaken the fundamental difference; for Why is not—? is a question of equal pertinence. But “to be, or not to be,” is no longer our alternative. We have sustained our immediate being against the ground of non-being, declaring that our non-being is not nothing, but rather a half of the reality. The objection now comes, that to this great reality there is an opposite—nihility, sleep, death; that being and not-being are not yet totality, but a combination which, however immediately prevalent, shows another in the possibility of *its* non-being; and so our absolute fact again threatens to slip away into a method. The aim of the objection is, to substitute for being and non-being (as the halves of reality) thought and non-thought—which are not halves of anything; for what is not thought—for instance, a square circle—is absolutely not, *because* not thinkable.

The objection says: If you *really* thought non-being—*realized* it, instead of merely supposing it—you would be annihilated. We answer:

What must be thought for thought, must be; and to think nothing is to think not.

This position does expressly presuppose thought of it; but thought alone must determine it, and the presupposition does not alter or in any way affect the result of thought's working after thought comes on the ground; nor is the conclusion impugned by the fact that thought itself proves to be the requirement of the position. That which shall save thought and all from utter nought is an ultimate distinction—some total in which an immediate and its ground are all, excluding opposition, *as a whole*. Now put the question: If distinction should vanish, what would remain? The objection answers: *Nought—death*. But consider: Was not distinction *all* when at its vanishing it left nought? If it was not all, its loss was not the loss of all; but if it was all, then it was distinction, not between any others, but all distinction and difference in and of itself: as *distinction* it had other in itself and for itself, and was self-related as its own other. To what other could it change *as a whole*? to what other could its vanishing give way, when its totality already contained the other of its immediacy? Becoming wholly other, *both* sides would change,

and it would stand precisely as at first. How can the loss of distinction *make a difference*? Distinction as an immediate topic, like any other, is the topic of a knower, as somewhat to be lost, and liable to afterthought as only a part of the whole, as which it was presumed. Any loss, at its utmost, offers a contrast of the new status with the old. Obviously, it is too late *now* to efface by any *change* the fact of distinction; a contrast must make the present only the more pronounced in any intelligence which is competent to the situation; and aught that may be conjectured, as either primordial or ultimate, shall be a status still, of which the present is proved as an ever-possible contrast and relief. There is no possible conjecture, whether void, plenum, or multiplicity, but such as carries with it, in the competent intelligence, the subjective which holds it as a status; and when the conjecture is of distinction in general—pure self-relation, rather than some mark or line in imagination—the subjective fills the void with distinction of itself. In the full meaning of thought, then, to think nothing were to think not; nihility is impossible; for it must be total or not at all, and, with nothing (as no distinction) for background, it could not have the character which its hypothesis now assumes in contrast with the universe of things.

But can this practically be—a distinction, not between others, but in and for itself—a total of itself—a universal? Truly, as we turn from theory to fact, thought, our presupposition, is just that; what we must find is what we do find; the ultimate, ineffaceable distinction is self-distinction, self-consciousness. The thought that must be is the very thought of our experience; the ultimate opposition, the to be *and* not to be, is personality, spirit—somewhat that is in knowing that it is, and is nothing else but this knowing in its vast relations.

Now, that sleep or death can teach one that this spirit, which has its other in itself as an essential and integral part of it, can become only one of its own halves, is not admissible. Becoming wholly other, *both* sides must change, while the unity is unchangeable. Let one sleep, then, long or briefly, it is indifferent to him; the reaction is to him instantaneous, the synthesis holds him surely, and no man has any experience on the contrary to be offered. And although it were truth to be said that in sleep and death we are not, yet looking in this light we might well say “we are not”

very extensively even when awake ; for all our thoughts but one “are not” continually. Let a man consider the very little thought that is in his consciousness at any one moment, and then the relapse from that little will seem no such bugbear of extinction. There should be little fear of death for a mind in which is continual resurrection.

If now we had so much of idealism as would assure us that the identity of sense and conception finds all its difference in the subjective relation, so that we might utterly free self-relation from all contamination of the time process, we might cry with confidence : Here lies the bed-rock ; here the brain-sweat of twenty-five centuries crystallizes to a “jewel five words long” : THE UNIVERSE HAS NO OPPOSITE. For here the wonder of that which is, and knows it is, rests safe in the perception that all things are only through the opposition which is their only fear—that if they are through this relation they are founded in thought, which alone can be relation—and that a whole in being, whether little or great, unit or universe, is self-related and immortal thought. This is the mystical x —the nameless, which cannot be unlocked ; for, while neither limb of it is possible without the other, one or the other is immediate and inevitable.

II.

OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THINGS, WITH HINTS FROM PYTHAGORAS :
DUPLEXITY, THE QUADRATURE OF THE CIRCLE, ETC.

Our general principle, as such, grounds no special difference as of things—accounts as yet for no variety or detailed ingenuity. The universe confronts us now : some principle has succeeded—is successful ; our vocation is not to invent, but to discover. Does the general principle of the inevitable extend to and explain the characters of particular things ? Is strife, opposition, contrast, sufficient to account for this wondrous world ? If we shall answer Ay, then each thing is the opposite and key to all others, as with it making a whole. Things are not infinitely next to one another, but their outlines are set by recoil from the limits of an ideal whole. The broken cell of the honeycomb can be mended in line with the other cells ; but for the missing head of the statue the torso calls on the ideal world. We may readily conjecture a universe in any

part of which an intelligence might proceed in the contrasting of things given, with no comprehension of the system—with no exhaustive catalogue of the results of opposition, nor any apprehension of the relations of knowing to the known. In so far as things await knowing, opposition of them would be only a temporal and exploitive principle. If strife is the father only as intelligence of things, knowing shall be in some sense the making of things before opposition can be credited as the true principle. And if it could in any way appear that things, or the conditions of things, are eternal, and that time and change are but a subjective and individual process playing over them, those conditions may stand ready for the same time and change to be made over them again, and the static or Eleatic principle would come in and so far prevail as it may without an explanation of time.

Let us consider the Pythagorean principle. We are used to suppose that number is founded upon things which are to be numbered; but Pythagoras held that things are founded in number, and that number is the substance of things. We may readily see that number is higher in thought than are things numbered.

The saying, "two and two make four," is a parable of vulgar certainty. But if by four, or two, or one, we mean anything which the eye of man ever saw, or the imagination of man ever conceived, or "matter" ever presented or produced, the parable is not true. For if two and two make four, four is made up of the contents of four; but how is it when four halves (of any things in this world) are as many as four wholes, while the contents are only half so much? Four pins are as many as four planets; four naughts are as many as four units; in short, the sensuous contents which the mind uses as stepping-stones to the idea of four are useless and indifferent after the idea is attained.

If this strange assertion—number is the substance of things—is true, it is true in two meanings: first, number in the sense of its greatness—its numberlessness, so to speak, will be the basis of totality; second, in the explicit discretion or particularity of number each separate thing will find its special basis in its particular number.

By number, in the sense first contemplated, we hold Pythagoras to have meant what we would call, in vernacular, *muchness*. Let us detect any creative principle therein.—You may beat a bushel

of stones down to three pecks of dust—a smaller bulk ; yet if you pile the dust on a windy knoll it will all be blown away, although the original stones, a larger heap, would remain in the same exposure for ages. This is a striking conclusion, in view of the fact that the atoms of a stone should be heavier, in proportion to their size, than the stone itself ; for we may suppose the stone to take fracture where it is least substantial. Why, then, is the atom less stable than the orb ? The reason is evident. When you cut a body in two, you increase the surface, while the weight remains unchanged. The atom has more surface in proportion to its weight ; and the mere identity of the matter (which is represented by the notion of size) loses its absoluteness in a difference of surface. The wind judges the atom, not on the ground of its identical weight, but with the eye of the creator of substance as measuring it against the show it makes in the world. Here is a principle of identity and difference. Seen from the standpoint of sensible apparition, a thing increased is not only more, but *more in proportion*—more, that is, in the hypothesis that reality appears ; a certain amount of appearance is wholly due to the fact of a thing being made less ; and a certain amount of substance is created (from the visual standpoint) in the fact of a thing being more. If the addition be universal, the whole is, by the amount of the whole, more by being the whole ; it is self-creative in its muchness. On the other hand, infinite bisection makes a thing all outside ; and self-related externality—a thing outside of itself—is all form, or self-consciousness.

But this ratio holds good only as between being and appearing, substance and form, identity and difference. In pure abstraction it is not true. If I add one to five I create nothing ; for six is no more in proportion than five. In pure identity, left to itself, is neither being nor not-being. Proportion comes only with difference, and is therefore a principle of only interdetermination, requiring presupposition. Part determining part, or part sustaining part, shows no originality nor totality. Though the grapes cling together, the whole cluster may fall.

As to the second meaning we may say that, whatsoever may be, the rational exploitation of it will begin or set out from the line on which difference first appears. The first difference will show between our first *this* (object) and its other, or ground of relief.

But since the totality is both this and the other, the first distinction is the absolute distinction—distinction not as between others, but wholly in itself—essential only as self-opposition—a substance (allowing the word) of energy. In the inherent activity of this opposition we may, perhaps, come to detect various beginnings for the exploitation of substance into discrete things; but the fact will remain that this is the First principle, and the assumption is proper that things are in an *order*; there is a Second—perhaps an order of seconds; so that, in view of any origin, every result will have its number and will be a number. So much for Pythagoras.

It is one great desideratum of philosophy to bridge the chasm between “mind” and “matter;” and everything that goes to the proof that pure ideas (number, liberty, harmony, equality, etc.) have effects in matter (so called) helps to rationalize the world. Truly it is hard, at first thought, to hold that opposition, or some other occult idea, creates this world; but, piercing through the gross embodiment of thoughts which make up our notions of God and man, we find that opposition is their principle—the result of our utmost analysis. It will be good for us, now, to make a few experiments with our ordinary life, showing instances in which abstract ideas develop sensuous results through opposition.

1. Not asking what force is, but admitting the usual meaning of the word, let us ask, What is the opposite of force? The readiest answer will be, Inertia. But in so far as the inert has the power of resisting and discharging force, it is itself a latent force, which may become positive. The pure opposite of force is liberty; resistance, confinement may illustrate force, and hence exhaust it in their own relative destruction. Now, if things get presence from contrast with their negatives or their opposites, and force can be seen to be due to liberty in this our world, an “abstraction” will be seen to affect “matter.”

Let a pound-weight fall fifteen inches to a spring balance, and it will show a weight of ten or twelve pounds gained in falling. A woodman, with a mere twitch of his wrist, can send an axe deep into a tree, and almost indifferently whether he may strike upward, downward, or sidelong, and the depth of the cut has no exhaustive relation to the strength applied; for he might lay the edge of the axe on the wood and push for an hour without making

such a cut. The force of the blow accords to the time in which the axe was at liberty ; the little force applied grew, while it met no resistance, to this cutting efficiency ; the extra force came from liberty. We seem to see this growth of force also in the human will and muscles. We see it also in the growth of a magnet ; the more the magnet is drawn upon the stronger it becomes.

Shall we not expect herefrom that liberty in a nation will give force to moral character, and invention to intelligence? A class of men cowed down by castes which they may never enter, and by a Church whose edifices, so far as any founding of theirs is concerned, may claim an equal date with Andes and with Ararat, can hardly look at things so free from prejudice as they who in the open country must build a church if they would have one. We see how the environment warps the genius of man in the case of Plato, whose largest work is about government and that sort of thing, which have but a remote relation to philosophy. Our German friends, too, have a deal to say of government and the Church—things which, to a man engaged in the more important query, how far the crack of a pistol would go toward finally settling his bill, seem but worldly trash and impertinence. And as for moral force, the fact is every day more apparent that it takes more lead to kill an American than any other man requires. It is within the memory of any living philosopher that men fell at a single pistol-shot, and often died of shock ; but a man who draws his revolver in these States to-day may need to very nearly empty it. General Jackson (was it ?) said of an antagonist : “ I would have killed him, sir, though he had shot me through the heart.”

I would not so congratulate my countrymen that this paper may not be pleasantly read by people of other lands, yet I believe that even those will endorse a claim which at all events I shall lay to another American excellence. That we are, in one sense, the most highly generalized intellect of the world, appears in the fact that, while our actors successfully presume to imitate the tones of voice of all other people, no actor of any country ever attempted to mimic plain United States. Whether the fact is due to our mongrel breed, or to our political institutions, we have sunk all the imitable peculiarities of speech ; we make the least effort in utterance of any people. Therefore we have no appre-

cial dialect. Our speech is, as Walt says, "the tasteless water of souls."

2. When a fast train of cars has passed before the eye, the track and its immediate surroundings seem to be moving in the opposite direction. How comes this apparent motion—this headway of the mind—in objects which, from the eye's standpoint, have not moved? The mind grasped the motion, at the passing of the train, with entire indifference as to whether the train was moving over the track, or the track was gliding under the train; the two objects shared the motion; the motion was possible only in two opposite directions; and the momentum of the thought, after the train has passed, seizes those surrounding objects which are less immediate and carries them after the train, while the more immediate objects and the track itself retreat in the contrast.

This reaction is like that of an eddy, where, in a rapid stream, loaded perhaps with ice, the water pours impetuously past the piers of a bridge—the whole force seemingly tending down the river, yet the motionless piers call the water back from a long way down. As the current passes the sides of the pier, the adjoining waters are revolved as a series of wheels, and when, on coming together below the piers, the perimeters of these opposite wheels become each a track for the other, the effect must be the same as it would be if the railroad should move toward and under the train with an equal speed; the train would stop when its direct impulse was exhausted. Behind the pier is a triangular, wedge-like space, free from the downward pressure, and the pausing wheels are forced back into this space by the lateral pressure of the main bulk of the water which was displaced by the pier.

In the case of the motion of things after a train of cars has passed, we usually call the effect an optical illusion; the eddy we usually call a reality; but radically there is no such difference between them. Let one look at the squares of a tessellated floor, or at a side elevation of a cube or a box, which gives three sides to the eye; by predetermining in his mind he can eventually see the figure either as a cube, or as three sides of a box opening toward him and lacking three sides; but if he attempt to so determine it instantly and voluntarily, he will find himself baffled—for these forms in the mind, or in the eye, have a crass and mechanical obstinacy which allies them to that same "reality" so respected in

the case of the eddy, and so suspected in the case of the train. The explanations of positive science are useless to philosophy; they ignore the potentiality of the negative and the compensation of totality. Their down is quite as well up. The stem and the blossom of the apple come together only by dividing—going around the world. The zephyr at last whispers in its own ear. The ship beats to windward by the negative force of the wind. How else?

3. Why do men die of insomnia? Why cannot they stop thinking? Because they cannot think anything without its other—its ground of relief, its immediate negative; it is because, as said the ancient, “one thing the gods cannot show us.” We have indeed power to drive away any immediate fancy or set of words from our attention, but lo! we leave behind, and immediately apparent, those associates from which it took its presence, got its background, opposition, and relief.

4. It has been observed that the trot of a dog will sometimes effect more sway in a bridge than the gallop of a horse. Any expert upon stringed musical instruments can, by striking one string, vibrate another, while still others near it shall be unmoved. Here is harmony producing physical effects; and the dog does the same feat. One string moves another whose vibrations are just opposite and fit into it, so that the pressure of each vibration catches that of the other at the limit of the recoil and drives it in the way in which it is then tending to go. So the dog, his gait being timed to the spring of the bridge, gives all his weight when the latter is going down, and makes the spring which lifts him while it is coming up; hence in crossing he throws his weight cumulatively into the liberty of the bridge. But the horse, not fitting his opposition to the elasticity of the bridge, is apt to come down when the bridge is coming up, giving a jar, but little motion, and making discord rather than harmony. “Harmony,” said Heraclitus, “is the *union* of discords”—that is, their fitting opposition. The drum of the ear would doubtless be found concurring in this correspondence or opposition of vibration, and connecting many ideal beauties with physical operations.

A wonderful thing is the uniformity of measures in musical time, among all races of men—the natural fitness of the length of a note as voicing a sentiment. A whole note—a complete senti-

ment, is just so far from another in its pitch, in all the music that ever was or will be to human nature. As one thing the gods cannot show us, so in one feeling they cannot keep us. Touch anything with your hand, and the sense of touch will last but a given time, and then it must be renewed in consciousness, by movement or change. So in music a sentiment arises and expires with a given amount of attention, and the seriousness or weight of thought graduates the time of its entertainment. Even so in poetry, the measure, "cadencing the pace," lets the attention recoil and take its necessary rest, with less disturbance of the march, at expected intervals. Perhaps time itself gets the measure of its progress from this vibration of rest and attention, as spirit exploits and fleshes the skeleton and scheme of the world. The uniformity of men as to rest and attention is very evident in the customary length of certain entertainments. The ordinary sermon has a grasp on its constituency of about thirty minutes; the drama has a grasp of about three hours; the lecture or other secular monologue was timed by "Artemus Ward" at just an hour and twenty minutes—for him. Something of this sort must account for the average length of sentences, for the measure of heroic verse, etc., etc.

According to the principle of opposition, the universe would be originally a silhouette—simple black on white; for all variety would be traceable back to a two-sided contrast. The poet Goethe contributed handsomely to this end in his theory of colors, proving by experiment that all the colors are such by having more and less of light.

Keeping still along the mathematical track of Pythagoras, let us try some geometrical evolutions, initiating a progress toward the invention of the various world from the simple action of opposition. While we do this the world at large will possibly view us with that complaisance which it has heretofore extended to those ancients of whom it was said, "they went on their way, rather regardless whether men understood them or not." Our attempt shall not be very pretentious as to results, but rather a mere specimen of effort, following which in his own way the reader may be surprised at the rapidity with which all variety precipitates itself to simple opposition.

1. We assume *position*. Its record is a point. The opposite

of position is a straightaway, of which the record is a line. The opposite of line is a straightaway from line (this does not extend the line as such); its record is a surface. The straightaway from surface gives depth or thickness—the recorded third dimension of a solid.

2. But the opposite of straightaway, what is that? Return, surely; but return on the same line were not so opposite as on a different line, if it be the least different; the record of this is the acutest angle. But to effect return we must make another angle to the point of departure. Perpendicular departure and return are now recorded in three angles, which can properly involve only two perpendicular or right angles. We find the result justified: a triangle contains two right angles. Euclid is with us; who can be against us?

3. We enter to the region of equality. The straightaway is an activity as such to any given extent. The perpendicular thereto, and to the same extent, gives the second dimension in a square; return to the point of departure being equivalent to both dimensions of the departure (although less in length) should give in the diagonal of a square the dimension of a space double the square; and Euclid is with us again: the square of the diagonal is the double of the square.

4. We come to the notion of force. The *activity* of opposition on the line of the straightaway, being special from the point, in the success of its effort forfeits the force of its impulsion; this throws the activity into degrees. At the same time, the activity of the opposite (the perpendicular) of the straightaway is also in degrees; both these forces, simultaneous in similar degrees, will be recorded in a diagonal of degrees—a curve—which, returning to the point of departure, will record the circle. The key to all geometry is in our hand. There is no theorem that is not an equation of oppositions.

Consider those propositions of the “*Edinburgh Encyclopædia*” (adopted for our schools in Davies’ “*Legendre*,” Book V, Proposition VIII, *et sequitur*), wherein the circle is assumed as a polygon of an infinite number (?) of sides. This assumption is designed to authorize the demonstration of the circle’s area by plane trigonometry; for, unless the lineal circle gives a straight side to each of the infinite number (*sic*) of triangles which gather around the

centre, those triangles cannot be right-angled to the radii; and unless the arcs behind these straight sides in the circumference can be exhausted by infinite bisection, the area cannot be absolutely determined by trigonometry; hence the claim of Proposition VIII, that the polygon can be made to differ from the circle by "less than any assignable quantity." Under this unworthy phrase is covered the fact that the polygon can never be assigned as so nearly a circle that it may not become nearer. The corollaries which thenceforth assume the identity of the two are unphilosophical. They sacrifice no *practical* advantage, yet they involve an error—not as wide as a church-door, but it will do, for in exact science we must not tolerate loose behavior on the ground that the offspring is "such a little one." Immortality is at stake upon the rectification of the error.

There is no radius perpendicular to a circumference as such, and there is no angle right in itself of which the least portion of a circumference forms a side. For if the assumed sides of the circle be infinite, the radii fill the area; there is room for but one dimension of space—there is length only. At the instant when space appears between two radii, the curve of the circumference pinches the angle acutely. Still, the result of the calculation is correct when that angle is assumed to be right; and the true area is as the circumference multiplied by half the radius.

The genius of Heraclitus relieves this inconsistency. Opposition is the life of things. Everything is through its other as opposite. The angle rights itself through opposition. The lineal circle is a process through infinite space to—nowhere; it returns into itself; in every advance it is seeking itself, and, soon or late, it finds itself. This is the Heraclitic secret of all things: in thought each is through its other. Look across at the other side of the circle, at the opposite spoke of the wheel. The first triangle, say, above the horizontal diameter is twin to the first below the diameter on the opposite side. As the circumferential side of the upper triangle bears away from a line perpendicular to the diameter, the counterpart side bears toward that perpendicular proportionately, and each compensates the other, and is made right through the other. But the process of calculation which ends in the "approximate ratio" of "3.1416—" (and we may suppose an approximate ratio to mean something not quite reasonable) is an

assumption of finding in one side of a thing a reason which is whole only in both sides—of finding somewhat in itself regardless of its other—while all that is perfect, universal, immortal, and especially geometrical, is through its other as the same.

The quadrature of the circle, therefore, as depending on the straight equivalent of a curved line, would require the wholly same of that which is the same and the other—that is, a theoretical direction coincident with that circular, self-seeking process, which cannot be said to be directly *anywhere*, since every infinitesimal tendency forward is biased by a tendency aside. The difficulty is purely theoretical. Measuring a circumference, and allowing the measure, its proper square is readily obtained after multiplying that result by one half of the allowed radius. Or otherwise: an arc a trifle less than a quadrant has a chord which, plus half of the greatest radial diameter of its segment, is equal to the arc's circumference. This arc is practically determinable; for the chord's ratio increases as the arc diminishes, and as the quadrant chord is a trifle too long, while the octant chord is too short, there needs but the empirical test to determine between them. As a matter of fact, the right arc is somewhere about 85° . But this empiricism has no philosophical interest. There is no measure of a thing save in its other as the same. The finest sensuous division-line becomes an area under the microscope, which area is nothing in itself, but wholly referent to the glass and the vision. There is no geometry otherwise than by opposition and equation; for there is no proof, in heaven above or in earth beneath, save as the other is the same.

Doubtless the tracing of all variety back to simple opposition will be one of the philosophical diversions of the future. Note but the constitution of man himself—how double and opposed. Firstly in his make-up note the primeval equation of something and nothing, as he stands visible and invisible, apprehensible only to the joint faculties of sense and spirit. See him then double and opposed as male and female; and curious science has gone so far as to detect in each of these orders the incipency of the other—the male in the female and the female in the male—as if, were one sex destroyed, that remaining could project the lost one from itself. Note again the duplexity in his two sides, right and left. From head to foot he seems put together as two almost indepen-

dent parts, each with its arm and leg and eye and ear and nerves of taste and smell and sound—each with its side of the brain, the heart, the lungs, and kidneys—each with its system of nerves and vessels—and one of these sides may be paralyzed while the other is working comparatively well. More intimately observe how each of the sides in turn is double in the method of its construction, in that it is throughout tubular—hollow and filled, container and content. The binding web, of which we might say it is the man proper, is stuffed with that of which we might say he properly is not; the food and the juices remain in their proper channels, and, with regard to the web in its integrity, may be said to enter the form but not the substance—like a knife stabbed into a billet of wood. But this tubular web in its turn is made of tubes; as in the old homoiomeria hair is made of little hairs, and feather of little feathers, and stones of little stones, and the world at large of little worlds, so every tube is made of tubes which are made of tubes in turn, until, beyond the last limits of microscopic observation, the sensuous identity fades in the infinite divisibility, and all that was known as mortal man becomes but an instigation of the world of thought.

His particular spirit and her paraphernalia are all likewise double and opposed—god and devil, heaven and hell, good and evil. Her action and fashion are of process and recoil; compensation is the key of her whole gamut of morals, literature, and art—a region whose opulence of suggestion must tempt in vain even the semi-systematic procedure of our essay, for philosophy shall note chiefly the method of being, and leave to positive science the specification of its details.

III.

IDEALISM; CURIOSITIES OF THE GENERAL AND PARTICULAR, ETC.

I said that the sensuous fades in the infinite divisibility, and reality precipitates in the world of thought. While we have the compass and the square in hand let us demonstrate the fact that the general cannot be asserted of the particular; let us say that no generality, such as motion, size, form, change, cause, can be asserted of material things.

The mechanic says, with all “common-sense” men, that the

rolling wheel moves ; the idealist says, No ; motion could at best be of thought only. For, says the idealist, if the wheel moves, it all moves, or else it would fly to pieces ? “ Yes.” And the track stands still ? “ Yes.” Then if the wheel moved, and the track were still, the wheel would grind the track ; but now a changing particle in the bottom of the wheel is still, and is a pivot for the motion of the other particles. If the wheel is lifted from its track and revolved, this particle takes its position at the centre, and the other particles go up and down, and right and left, around it ; set the wheel on the track again, and then the forward motion of the centre assumes the backward motion of the bottom, the top doubles its speed, and the bottom is still as the track. This is a nonplusing conclusion of its kind ; but all such become partial when subjected to analysis. How can bottom and centre, or any other generalities, be asserted of a wheel if motion may not be asserted ? *Is there a bottom or a centre of a wheel ?* or are these bottom and centre in the mind only ? Surely the latter. Every part of the perimeter of a wheel should be a curve, and no part of it can have a curve so short as to be all bottom ; and no part of a wheel can be small enough to be the centre, but it must rather be so large as to be capable of a centre of its own.

“ But this does not confute the motion when two bodies become nearer ; we can see them moving, and we can compare the results of the motion.” I might ask here, Has any change taken place in either of the bodies, considered by itself, in consequence of their alleged coming nearer ? Or, Does the difference of things belong to them ? But we shall let these questions bide a while, and resume the topic farther on.

Let us try the quality of size ; we are used to think that everything has a size of its own. A thousand men will laugh at the same jest and be wroth at the same indignities ; they will march in the street with such an intuitive agreement of time that they might be supposed with close attention to march around the world, and keep the step of those who marked time in their absence ; they will take a pitch in music and keep it in the same way ; and they will all look at a pea and get the same notion of its size ; yet, seen through a microscope (which is but an improvement of vision), the pea will show a thousand features justifying its true size, or one of its true sizes, as that of an ordinary cannon-

ball, clearly showing that its size is given it by the quality of the vision—the size of the mind. That is a fearful speed which we attribute to the earth in its revolution—a thousand miles an hour past any given point in space; but if your eye were as large as the earth, and the earth as an object before it took all day to turn over once, the hour-hand of a watch, which cannot ordinarily be seen to move, would beat her two to one, and the motion would practically cease. So of other things; their size is the size of the mind. Little is much if it be our all. The two mites of the widow were the largest gift. Our loss is measured by our possessions. “If a man lose even his goose,” said the late lamented Billings, “I will weep with him, for it is a tough thing to lose—a goose.” The boy wants a little horse, and a little wagon and spade; he comprehends them better as being small; and he cuts off the corners of things, and wants everything round, and smooth, and sweet. But as he grows older things seem less to him; he no longer cuts off the corners, but he detects a beauty in tangents and angles, prophetic of his own outreaching nature; the sweets pall on his taste, which covets astringents; and he indulges in abnormal experiences, as the commonplace loses its interest, until some day the conflagration of the firmament were but the bonfire of an hour, and the empery of heaven were but the sadness of a lover, to the majesty of his limitless appreciation.

And so of all quantity, quality, mode, or relation; they seem to belong not to things, but to the intelligence in which things appear. Here we are in the midst of idealism.

Idealism is the doctrine that the world is a phenomenon—that matter is experience. Things do not exist ready made and waiting to be known, but knowing, intelligence, is a main factor, at least, in their composition. Pushed to extremities, it will declare that the house over the way is not a house unless “I” (that is an “I”) see it; that the apple is not yellow *inside*, but color and juice and seeds follow the knife that makes them *outside*; that there is no more an unseen color than there is an unfelt pain, and that there is no form save as thought grasps a wholeness among the conditions precedent; “in other words” (the man of ‘common sense’ will add), “idealism is nonsense!” Yet possibly the more contemptuous his denouncement of these positions, the more bit-

ter will be the potion he will have to swallow if he lives to attain an explanation of the world.

A thing exists by distinction, or difference; every *one* shows only as against *other* which is its ground. One without other would be all and nothing. Put a green color on a green ground and it is lost beyond recovery; the identity is there, but the original "thing" is lost by destroying the distinction, the difference, the limit. Identity without difference is indistinguishable—the same in all and for all. Now, the difference of two things is not a property of either. Suppose all the difference of the world represented by a big stone and a little one. Question, Are they big stone and little stone in and of themselves? Surely, no; neither remains what it now is, in this respect, if you take the other away. They are big and little only in something that contains both. Or suppose all things to be six in number; are they six of themselves? Surely, no, for each is now a sixth; but if I surreptitiously remove one, I shall not alter the identical nature of the others, yet each other will become a fifth. Or suppose a thing to have the quality of being a mile away; need I do anything to it in order to make it two miles away? Certainly not, for I can go the odd mile myself. Well, if the difference of two things (existing only by difference) is not a property of either, whose property is it? There can be but one answer: It is the property of that which relates them, or holds them in comparison or distinction; and this only intelligence can do. Without a difference which is not their own, things cannot be known, and hence cannot be known to be.

"But though the two stones may not be big and little of themselves, are they not at least stones of themselves, regardless of comparison?" No; the difference between big and little is not more radical than the difference between stone and wood. It is impossible to think of anything independent of contrast. If all were stone it would cease to need that name, and would become merely that identity which is the same for one and all, because it shows no difference as such. The identity of stone, and the identity of intelligence as knowing only stone, cannot differ. If intelligence furnishes the difference of things, the sense which accompanies the intelligence may as well furnish the identity, for it will make no difference in the knowing whether the identity be within or without. Fichte held it to be within.

That is a grave error wherein sense is posited as a faculty of "difference," "multiplicity," as of points which thought combines into wholeness. Sense is a faculty of identity only, and presents no difference whatever. We cannot see without thinking. Sensations cannot differ without memory and relation. As "multiplicity," sense would furnish a multitude of wholes, and not of mere parts—mere difference; for a part is a whole on its own account. A square, for instance, is made up of parts—lines and angles; is there any of these parts (assumed to be made into a whole by relating thought) which is not a whole made up of parts in its turn? The angle is made up of related lines; the line is made up of related points, and the point, if visible, is an area that can be centred and pointed again so long as it can be magnified; and so on. What sense can apprehend, therefore, is whittled to a point and disappears into mere identity or ground. This is Fichte's insight, and his only way to turn matter into reason.

The realist says he knows what he sees; the idealist says he sees what he knows: flesh cannot see; it is the thought-form in his mind which relates one side of a square to another, instead of to something on the opposite side, and so makes a whole, a thing of the square; and surely there is nothing in the elements themselves compelling this relation on combination. The edge of the blackboard is as good a line as any. The diagram in itself is but chalk and wood; chalk and wood are but colored impenetrability; the color dies in the night, and the impenetrability flies before acid, electricity, etc. Can a horse see a square, a circle, a triangle? If we fancy him so capable let us ask further: Here is a picture of the crucifixion of Christ—can he see that? Surely none of these things exist for him; he has no thought-forms to impose as whole, among these conditions; he knows neither paint, canvas, nor gilding. "Yes, but these things are there!" True, in *your* world; and there is possibly another world "there" which you no more see than the horse sees yours.

Why cannot an untaught man look in your face and then draw your expression as an artist can? He may have a better eye and hand than the artist has; he may play on many instruments, be a good marksman, and a generally close observer, yet he cannot draw your expression because he cannot "see the difference"; he has not the thought-forms which make wholes ("things") of those

small variations upon which expression depends, and which are numbered, perhaps, "25," "26," etc., in the book of the artist's art. And if the untaught man knew no better the difference of eye and nose than he knows the difference which makes expression, he could not see a face at all. Again the realist will say these things are "there," to be seen; and again the idealist will retort, The conditions are there, but only through thought-forms can they become things. (What "conditions" are is not just here important, so long as they are not these things.)

Hard though it may be for the positive intellect to accept an ideal explanation of things, the positivist has only to push his own method to a radical conclusion to find it utterly inadequate and confused. Not only are reason and sense antagonistic in the determination of reality, but the senses are antagonistic as such. Take the instance of the discharge of a gun: the eye, which sees the issuing smoke, denounces the ear as too late in hearing the reality; then comes the demonstration that light is in motion, and that vision therefore requires time, and then the eye in turn is shown to be too late for the reality, and must be superseded by feeling itself; but again the positivist fails of instant contact—demonstrating that nerve itself transmits intelligence at the rate of only 180 feet per second—and even then only sense is reached, and the unity of perception has yet to follow. Hereby the thing in itself, the external reality, is utterly annulled. For if vision depends on light, and light comes from the thing observed—a star, for example—one may find himself looking at a star that perished years ago, and whose orphan beams are still travelling to his eye. Obviously, in this case, he sees no star; and, further, the proof is at hand that he never did see a star, but only these beams—which may then be assumed as living and advancing as a star through every quarter of the universe, and filling it full of a star which is not real either as objective or subjective.

Standing firmly on this ground (that things are by relation, and that relation is in thought alone), the idealist is besieged with questions which as yet are not fully answered to the satisfaction of any. "If the things which I see are made by intelligence, and do not exist without it, whose intelligence is it? Certainly not mine: I cannot paint such a picture as this which I am looking at; and from here I cannot even read the name of the artist there in the

corner." No, the idealist will answer, it is not your intelligence. "But can anything be done by intelligence that is not done wisely and designingly? is there unconscious and mechanical intelligence?" The idealist must answer, No. "Well, can I be in *rapport* with an intelligence—can it be through me, or I through it, and I not know it?" Probably not. "Then how can I hold that I make or contribute to the things I see?" There is certainly a difficulty in so holding—a difficulty equalled only by the difficulty in letting go. The man who has got so far as to ask these questions has "caught a Tartar." And one thing is certain: he will never relinquish the fact on account of the embarrassment attending on the proof of it.

But at any rate idealism inures greatly to the dignity and repose of man. No blind fate, prior to what is, shall necessitate that all first be and afterward be known, but knowledge is first, with fate in her own hands. When we are depressed by the weight and immensity of the immediate, we find in idealism a wondrous consolation. The positive, so vast and overwhelming by itself, reduces its pretensions when the whole negative confronts it on our side. It matters little for its greatness when an equal greatness is opposed. When one remembers that the balance and motion of the planets are so delicate that the momentary scowl of an eclipse may fill the heavens with tempest, and even affect the very bowels of the earth—when we see a balloon, that carries perhaps a thousand pounds, leap up a hundred feet at the discharge of a sheet of note paper—or feel it stand deathly still in a hurricane, because it goes with the hurricane, sides with it, and ignores the rushing world below—we should realize that one tittle of pure originality would outweigh this crass objective, and turn these vast masses into mere breath and tissue-paper show.

We see the force of idealism, too, in all our moral relations. The wrath of the lamb cuts deeper than the stroke of the sword. When we see the mother beg to suffer in lieu of her children—the father for the son and the son for the father—when a lock of faded hair from a dead woman's head will bring the outlaw and the ruffian to his knees, and when a bit of striped bunting on a staff will lead a man through the jaws of death for his country, we learn that neither the impulse nor the advantage of "the world" is the key to history in the past or prophecy in the future.

IV.

THE INFINITE (*an extravaganza*).

Said Parmenides, "That that which is should be infinite is not permitted." The universe is founded at the centre, and the vagaries of infinite liberty shall not carry it beyond the limits of symmetry and proportion—an excess of which, for the mere advantage of liberty, were but excrescence and monstrosity. The masculine and centrifugal tendency recoils in the feminine and centripetal. Self-love is conservative against mere change. A man or a god may use his liberty in forever adding ciphers to unity, not in the hope of exhausting or even exemplifying the infinity which is his own, but rather in exhausting the ambition or the spleen which can relieve itself only by action. No man of intelligence ever felt his safety threatened by the greatness of the external infinite, nor found his thought enlarged by an outward process that he may reverse inwardly right where he stands. From all such excursion the return is assured, and the advance is charged to inexperience. The kid may gambol and run off; the dam stands quiet and looks on. And he who has gone farthest in the vicissitudes of fortune is most prone to recover in memory the track of his youth. So an infinite past reviewed would add to the presently forgotten the charms of reminiscence, or recognition, and affection.

Wondrous and alluring to the youth is the external infinite—the traveller's paradise—vagrancy in the manifold—the ever-changing otherness; and he embarks for Fool Haven—anywhere but here. But the old man finds his charm in compensation, retribution, and return. He has found that *he* is not other for all this otherness; for him the kingdom is not lo! here, or lo! there, but within. It is he who carries the glory and the romance to Lodi and Thermopylæ; it is his standpoint that adjusts the configuration of the starry host; the weight of a rose-leaf too much dropped upon his planet may crack the crown in heaven; nor in all the world shall he find a greatness or a beauty which takes not its majesty and harmony from his own soul. The ultimatum comes to us in three degrees: the limited, the unlimited, and the self-sufficient: the heaven of the senses, the heaven of progression, and the heaven of liberty and safety. Perhaps I may not better

illustrate the first two degrees than by quoting some of my own sentences at the second stage :

“ We know the heaven of man’s sensual dreams. There is golden, glorious light there, and music, as the forest pines were strung to the arch of the rainbow, and thrilled by exhilarating winds—winds that remember the brown eternities of the slumberous land of Egypt, and the marbles wrecked in Asia—winds that blow over the cedars of Lebanon and the groves of Arabia, and bear their enchanting legends through the strings. He shall have joy in a swift-moving and ethereal nature; he shall pace the golden streets, and look out from the crystal battlements of the City of God; and the stars shall sing again to the roses of nature, as through the dews of the world’s first morning. But what of God the while?—what of the infinite and the eternal? Think you to loiter on the same flowery banks, and listen to the purling of the same silver streams, forever? Where is that ever-hungry Soul which even now—smothered in flesh until it can dote upon the jingle of a rhyme—can yet long for the harmonies of universal law, and wonder how free, how brave, how happy it may ever grow? Where is the wit that conceived of the ambition of Lucifer and the treason of Uriel? Is it content? In this definite outline does the hope of Heaven end? Nay—it does not here begin. Not in the hope of a blessed abode, in music and light and dreams—not in the hope of eternal rest, by hours fanned—but in the hope of the glory of God—in the hope of eternal advancement—yea, even in the knowledge that there is no home, nor stay, nor station on the wild, bright way we know not whither, we shall spurn these heavens of the dull imagination. From the colonnades and temples in gardens elysian, where blooms of amaranth shade the lamb and the lion, and fancy hears the footfalls of the loftiest of time, past thrones, principalities, and constellations—past crowns whose jewels win the lifted eyes of Gabriel and Michael, up through laws and harmonies which it hath not entered into the heart of man nor angel to conceive—which are to music as is music to the grating of a dungeon hinge, shall rise the flying soul—and the blessed air shall echo to her shouting, far o’er the lost ideals of this world, ‘Thanksgiving! thanksgiving to the Lord God Almighty, who calls and calls us through the universe of glory!’ ”

But what is this? "thanksgiving!" dependence! Am I still in bondage to the external? This is no heaven of mine; it is the heaven of the high gods. Lo! where they recline on asphodel; prudence, solicitude, observance, to them are not; no sympathy with my doubt and weakness ruffles the languor of their patrician repose: only the odor of human frailty forever rising around the scentless ermine of the purple-born, the unaccountable. Is there any safety, any repose for *me*? Amid all this pageantry of greatness I am no greater than before; I am a slave, and I must know it and resent it. And I think of him who, nurtured in the court of Heaven a hundred youths and ages, old in change, yet change that was ever in amenable and duteous modes, while far beneath him, in the untried depths, he saw the possibility of testing his strength and his endurance, could he less than try if aught were all his own? He ventured; had he done it not, even I must have done that for him which was done once for all, and which now crowns his brow with forlorn empery. In my heart is it written that it shall be written, "There was war in heaven"; and some blasted shore must show the record of his pride and anguish—footprints *like mine*, quick stamped in the molten sands, where the whipt spirit fled by fiery waves, or by thy tattered heart, Oh! thou pale Titan, that legend was a prophecy. A slave?—thanksgiving to the external?—Nay, hear the noble Fichte: "I raise my head bravely to the threatening rock, the raging flood and the fiery tempest, and cry, 'I am eternal, and defy your might; break all upon me! and thou Earth, and thou Heaven, mingle in the wild tumult! and all ye elements, foam and fret yourselves, and crush in your conflict the last atom of the body which I call mine! my WILL, secure in its own firm purpose, shall soar unwavering and bold over the wreck of the universe; for I have entered on my vocation, and it is more enduring than ye are—it is eternal, and I am eternal like it.'"—Great heart! not all of us can wear thy mantle, nor assume thy demeanor; we tremble, we stagger, but we stagger toward the throne.

Then "backward, turn backward, O time! in thy flight." I will unto my yesterdays "out at the gate of childhood, not of death." I have strayed from my integrity. Born upright, I have found out too many inventions of an otherness which is ever the same. I will back to my own world. Farewell, ye wander-

ing lights and strange configurations—ye shifting punctuations of the illegible night; my own standpoint shall restore to me the one sentence I have lost. Northward I went forth—negative, self-diremptive: I left Arcturus behind me; the diamond shaft of Alcyone pierced no longer the dewlaps of *THE BULL*; I shook the cable of that utmost world whose silver lea-wales lap our deepest blue. I return by the southern pole. *ORION*! again I greet thee: a hunter too was I; the game flavor of the infinite enchanted me, and lured me on. But now — be these happy tear-drops in my eyes? or do I see again, as long ago upon the Indian Ocean, watching with the lady of my love, I saw, through the Oriental twilight, white, liquid, palpitating, the jewels of *THE CROSS*? Again, pale spectre of His pleading arms? Plead thou no more: I come—but my eyes are Earthward bent. I see the Sabbath morning and the golden hills, and in the clangor of a hundred mellow bells—calling slowly, *Calvary! Calvary!*—I learn the lesson of His coming and my own: mine is the infinite; I, too, am divine.

V.

THE HUMAN ALPHABET.—THE “*KRATYLUS*” OF PLATO, ETC.

We have urged the notion that the implicit and the explicit are coincident. There is no more thought than there is expression for, either as adopted in forms of things or in conventional terms. In all discussion of the topic of language the onus falls upon the origin of it, as if special thoughts preceded language, rolling and weltering like cats in a bag, striving for light and exit. The anxiety seems equally strenuous when we fancy language wandering about, seeking a meaning to invest it. “In the beginning was the word.” Thought and language seem to come together. What is all our cogitating and writing but an effort to wed form and the formless? Language is built on and on, like the bents of a bridge, one sliding out over another; and while it is mainly conventional—as the thousand human languages amply prove in their wholly arbitrary difference—yet the same properties of intelligence which make a dot stand well for a centre make certain sounds specially fit and happy in suggesting their appropriate conceptions. In this respect we may say of language as of religion: Many are the altars, but the flame is one—however dull

that flame may appear among people whose needs have not yet lifted expression to the uses of an art.

All the reading of my serious years has been attended by this side consideration: that each of the sounds represented by the several letters of the alphabet is specially effective in conveying a certain significance; and wherever language is popular and happy it is so in accordance with these early intuitions. That I was not singular in this sensitiveness I was assured by hints dropped by Swedenborg and the poet Burns; but I had not as yet chanced upon the "*Kratylus*" of Plato when, in 1854, I anonymously issued, through James Munro and Company, of Boston, a characterization of the meanings of all the alphabetic sounds. The subject of that essay came up to me again, some years afterward, on the occasion of Mr. Stephen Pearl Andrews's issuing his theory in the "*Continental Magazine*." Seeing his article therein, I sent him my essay, and received in return his cordial astonishment at the fact that I, an unread tyro, had come by nature or instinct upon mainly the same results which he claimed to have deduced as scientific necessities. He said his next article in the "*Continental*" should include the gist of my essay; but, sadly enough, the magazine had come to its final end. In 1868 I made some extracts from my essay for "*Putnam's Magazine*," and that periodical also soon after went under in the current of literature. In all this time I knew nothing of the "*Kratylus*," and I do not know even now whether Mr. Andrews was better informed than myself. These statements are to be considered—and, fortunately, it is the custom of gentlemen to believe one another—otherwise what follows might seem at best only a lesson improved; but when it truly appears that as a youth of inconsiderable reading I in English unknowingly concurred with Plato in Greek, in the interpretation of the sounds of a dozen of the letters, the fact has philological value as an unprejudiced approval of Plato's observation. For my own part I can cheerfully forego the originality for the comfort of the coincidence. There is good assurance that Plato did not borrow from my list, in the fact that in any case he left several of the more significant letters behind him; and even those meanings which he did express seem to have only a brawny immediacy which would be useless in the far and fine suggestions of modern poetical art. In saying they *seem* to have this quality I am

considering how far any scholar, not born to the Greek language and manner, must come short of that wit and humor which the "Kratylus" undoubtedly embodied for one familiar with Greek precedent and current Greek slang; for the "Kratylus" was the same to Plato's audience as would be to us a clever exposition of the slang and the fortunate poetical expressions of our own times. It is next to an impossibility that any one now living should read that work with the insight whereby it was written.

I shall not here enter that laborious region of the science of language whose tangled cross-purposes were the spur of the "Kratylus," involving as they do questions of the like and the double, substance and form, being and existence, and so on through absolute idealism into the intricacies of self-relation, but shall give my alphabet, and then proceed to briefly exemplify the force of each letter—or rather of the sound of each letter; for in Greek *a* was sounded as *ah*, *η* was sounded like our *a*, etc. Yet firstly we must come to an understanding as to the basis or canon of criticism in our art. A jury of common-sense men might be excused for a verdict, on their book oath, that there is not a word of sense in what follows; but the same jury, asked if they had ever heard

"The horns of elf-land faintly blowing,"

would doubtless protest that they never had. Neither would I accept the greatest poetical genius in the world's record—Shakespeare confessedly—as a judge hereof, so soon as I would accept Tennyson or Swinburne. We are not concerned with the majesty or the symmetry of what is uttered in language, but with the subtle associative art of uttering it—in which art the Laureate has excelled all other men. The use of words of mere onomatopy—buzz, hiss, wheeze, sneeze, splash, slush, hum, roar, jingle—requires little or no skill; but the meagre and savage art which produced these imitations was precursory and prophetic of a later and more delicate and more complex suggestiveness, the voice of the same instinct in the presence of all the facts and fancies which this brightest age remembers and conceives, a suggestiveness reaching beyond mere sounds to the faintest modes and qualities of fibre, surface, lustre, distance, motion, humor, solemnity, contempt—characters won out of all the phenomena of life, and answering to the fullest knowledge, or intuition, or inspiration, of

all the mental phenomena of the world at the moment of its use, to the true estimate of the comparative age and æsthetic value of thought and things—in brief, to the universality of experience. We are ready to allow that no man ever earnestly wrote a verse that was not poetry to him at the time; but the experience of the majority of the sons of Parnassus has not been coincident with that of a sufficient constituency to render their impressions considerable. Besides, the basis of wit and poetry fluctuates and extends. A great genius drains a great area; he destroys the old balances and standards. The essence we would precipitate rises as an aroma out of the process of the growth and decay of all things, and it is effected by considerations the faintest and most remote, in the attenuations of which a great poet may transcend the apprehension of his less devoted readers.

MAN'S NATURAL ALPHABET.

- ā* : vastness, space, plane.
- ǎ* : flatness.
- b* : brawn, bulk, initial force.
- c* : soft, as *s*; hard, as *k*.
- ch. tch* : a disgusting consistency.
- d* : (initial) determination, violence.
- d* : (final) solidity, end.
- ē* : convergence, intensity, concentration.
- f* :)
- h* :) ethereality, fineness of fibre.
- t* :)
- g* : (hard) hardness.
- gl* : hardness and polish.
- gr* : hardness and roughness, grit, grain.
- ī* : thinness, slimness, fineness.
- î* : inclining directions.
- k* : fineness of light and sound.
- l* : polish, chill, liquidity.
- m* : monotony.
- n* : negation, contempt.
- o* : volume, solemnity, nobility.
- p* : volume without fibre, pulp.
- q* : queer, questionable.

r : roughness, vibration.

s : moisture.

sh : wet confusion.

ŭ : crudity, absurdity.

v, w, y : vehemence, general emphasis.

z : haze, dry confusion.

Diphthongs :

au : vaulting, curving upward.

ou : roundness, curving downward.

oi : coil—external.

ei : coil—internal.

ia : downward and away—flourish.

As the compositor locates his types before him in his case for his own convenience rather than as following the conventional order of the alphabet, so we must treat firstly the five vowels on which all the other letters expend their force.

[The reader will please to bear in mind that the letters as such are arbitrary, and that the sounds are the important consideration. The Greek pronunciation was like our own, convertible to fashion : *ă* (as in *ah*) was convertible to *ō* (as omikron) ; the Æolians used either ; *a* was also sounded as *η* (*ā*), and doubtless *ι* was sometimes sounded *ē*, as it is in southern Europe to-day. Omega (the long *o*) was convertible with *oo* (as in *cool*), and with *au, ou*, as well as with *ă*, as in *father*, or *ō*, as in *bother*].

ā.—"Far, far away, over the calm and mantling wave"—so begins the boy's first romance—the poetry of the ocean, of vastness, space, plane. The *word*, ocean, is used only for rolling and dashing effects ; the *wave*, the *main*, *vast waters*, *watery waste*, or *plain*, are the poetical synonyms of ocean. *Lake*, *vale*, *straight*, *chase*, *race*, *trail*, *trace*, *away*, give distance and plane. Near at hand, long *a* gives effect to *slate*, *scale*, *flake*, *plate*, *cake*, etc. *Waver*, *shake*, *quake*, show horizontal vibration.

ă.—The flat *a* shows its effect in *mat*, *pack*, *strap*, *slap*, *platter*, *flap*, *pat*, *flat*, *clap*, etc. ; *dash*, *splash*, *thrash*, give flat and low-down effects. A stone much broken, yet retaining its bulk, is said to be *crushed*, but if its form is borne down it is *mashed*, *smashed*, etc. Burns, in his poem, "The Vowels," calls *a* "a

grave, broad, solemn wight"; this character belongs to *a* only as in *ah*, or *ö* flat.

ē.—Swedenborg said that the angels who love most use much the sound of *ō*, while the more intellectual and penetrating use more the sound of *ē*. Burns's notion of *e* was that of intense grief, as in "greeting" (that is, in Scotch, weeping). The Greek ejaculation for grief or regret (as we would say *alas!* or the like) was "ê-ê!" Plato seems to have not observed it. The general use of *e* is for concentration and convergence, or intensity, the bringing of thought to a focus. All the pet names and endearing diminutives end in *e*—the wee things—the le-etle, te-eny things. The child dwells on the *e* in *pé-ep*, or *pé-ek*, and in *mé-an*, *ké-en*, *sné-aking*, etc. Not so the baby when he gives you his rattle-box; he opens his mouth and his heart with the instinct of the dative case, and says "tah!"—outward and away. So when he gets the wrong thing in his mouth his mother cries "Ka! spit it out!" whence, possibly, the Greek *κακος*—bad, as applied to things. The introspective Hamlet says, "making night hideous and we fools of nature" instead of *us*, the objective case. *Zeal*, *squeal*, *screech*—to *be*, to *see*, to *feel*, are strong by the use of *ē*.

ī.—I, short, as in *pin*, has a stiff, prim, thin, slim, spindling effect, as of the "bristling pines"; or when "Swift Camilla" "skims along the main." It has a thinning, perpendicularly attenuating effect. A "light skiff" is well mentioned; and a thin whiff.

"O hark, O hear, how thin and clear!"

Short *i* has a very lightening effect in sounds: as in *tinkle*, *clink*, *link*—thin metallic sounds of a perpendicular vibration. But flat, or horizontal vibration uses *ā*, as in *clank*—as of a sheet of zinc slapping the floor; how different from the *clang* of a bar of steel! *Tin* is a good word for that metal in the thin shape most commonly known; but in the native bulk and volume we call it *block*.

ī.—Long *i* gives inclination. "The clouds *consign* their treasures to the field." "In winter when the dismal rain comes down in slanting *lines*."

I long and *ā* give a poetical curve, downward and away:

"Once in the flight of ages past."

"Many an hour I've whiled away."

"Swilled by the wild and wasteful ocean."

"Some happier island in the watery waste."

"O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?"

"Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem."

"O, wild enchanting horn!"

o.—Plato seems to have done miserable injustice in characterizing for simple roundness the vowel *o*—the noblest Roman, or Greek either, of them all. Roundness is well enough—although roundness proper is represented by *ou* diphthong—but roundness is merely the key to volume, solemnity, nobility, and wonder. Read this most solemn sentence in all literature, and see at once the more serious meaning of *o*.

"For man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."

Not all the trappings and the suits of woe can so pall the sunlight in the homes of men as does the fit reading of this sombre verse. Burns's idea of *o* was expressed in "the wailing minstrel of despairing woe." Swedenborg's insight was rather one of adoration or devotion. But these comparatively incidental expressions give way before the philological art of more modern writers. All things noble, holy, adorable, or sombre, slow, sober, dolorous, mournful, devotional, or old, lone, sole, glorious, or even bold, portly, pompous, find their best expression in the *o* sound. Jehovah, Jove, Lord God, exalt the soul. O! ho! lo! are exclamations which nations use with little variance.

"O Rome! my country, city of the soul,
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee!"

"O sad Nomore! O sweet Nomore."

"Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll!"

"Their shots along the deep slowly boom."

"The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way."

Most people think of a *boulder* as a big, bulky stone; the dictionaries use the word for a *class* of stones of which one need not be greater than a pea. The *o* gives the volume, and the initial *b* gives the bulk and brawn—which make our favorite dictionary

so popular as the “unaBridged.” Yet in *pebble*, which is one third made up of *b*, we get no bulk at all, owing to *e* and *p*.

u.—Burns had some notion of the effect of *u*; he speaks of it as “grim, deformed, with horrors entering”; but obviously this was only a careless glance of that great genius, who probably had never thought of the character before, and who possibly never thought of it again. As no one else, to my knowledge, has given any character of *u*, and for the purpose of showing the reader how possessed I was by this philological art or instinct in my youth, I will quote in full my definition of *u* of thirty years ago. The slang of it will be excused on the consideration that slang is *u*’s best hold, and about all he is any good at.

U, guttural, or flat, is a humorous savage, best described in his own words: a huge, lubberly, blundering dunderhead, a blubbering numskull and a dunce, ugly, sullen, dull, clumsy, rugged, gullible, glum, dumpish, lugubricus—a stumbler, mumblor, bungler, grumbler, jumbler—a grunter, thumper, tumbler, stunner—a drudge, a trudge; he lugs, tugs, sucks, juggles, and is up to all manner of bulls—a musty, fussy, crusty, disgusting brute, whose head is his mug, his nose is a snub, or a pug, his ears are lugs, his breasts dugs, his bowels guts, his victuals grub, his garments duds, his hat a plug, his child a cub, his dearest diminutive is chub or bub or runt; at his best he is bluff, gruff, blunt; “his doublet is of sturdy buff, and though not sword, is cudgel proof”; budge he will not, but will drub you with a club, or a slug, nub, stub, butt, or rub you with mud—for he is ever in a muss or a fuss—and should you call him a grudging curmudgeon he gulps up “uh! fudge! stuff! rubbish! humbug!” in high dudgeon; he is a rough, a blood-tub, a bummer, and a tough cuss all around; he has some humor, more crudity, but no delicacy; of all nations you would take him for a Dutchman.

In spite of all this, *ū* long seems to give force to the true, the pure, the beautiful, and the good. “True blue” is a proverb of the highest worth, while *rude* and *crude* are the opposite. But the *u* is not the characterizing letter in these latter words, which get their roughness from *r*.

Of the diphthongs, *au* seems to me effective in *vault* (to leap or swing), *flaunt*, *toss* (taus), *saunter*, *jaunt*, *haughty*, *walk*, *halting*, and the like. *Ou* is the curve of *roundness*, as in *bough*, *bow*

down, crown, around, mound, bound (tied around). “Down the shouldering billows borne.” *Oi* strikes me forcibly in *coil*. *Iou* is a favorite curve with the poets.

“And false the light on glory’s plume.”

“The wide old wood resounded to her song.”

“Of love’s, and night’s, and ocean’s solitude.”

But the vowels are weak and delicate when compared with the consonants, which give to language its fibre and its nerve.

b.—As a special intensity, *b* represents the disposition to swell out the cheeks and utter an exaggerating and sometimes contemptuous explosion, such as *boo! bah! bosh! bully, bravo!* etc. *B* gives volume in a crude and semi-humorous mode. Thus *brawny, brusque, blunt, burly, bulky, big, bully, brassy*, besides carrying a certain direct and proper meaning, reject all refinement in favor of a humorous brag, burlesque, and exaggeration of the Brobdingnagian “unabridged” order. It is especially strong in connection with *u* short—a regular “buster,” a “big bug,” bugbear, Bluebeard, and bugaboo—a bombastic, brazen buck and blower.

c.—This letter is only *s* and *k* as convertible, and has little individuality; that little is a kind of slipperiness; *ch* and *tch* are used for absurdity as bordering on disgust. Thus in *itch, bitch, botch, pitch, hutch, scotch* (to haggle or wound), *smutch, smirch, screech*, etc., a class of words avoided by refined society, because their humor is offensive.

d.—Plato uses *d* and *t* alike for determination or binding at an end. We see the effect of *d* immediately in *wad, sod, clod, load, rugged, leaden, dead*. The short report of a heavily-loaded pistol is well caught in the word *explode*.

“Earth’s cities had no sound nor tread,
And ships were drifting with the dead
To shores where all was dumb.”

As initial, or beginning a word, *d* shows a resolved or violent disposition, as if the teeth were set: thus in *damn, dare, do, dig, drive, dogged*, etc. The metal *lead* is well named; so are iron, tin, and silver. What little effect *t* has, as apart from *h*, is certainly similar to that of *d*, as Plato averred.

f, h, t, and th.—These are the ethereal, softening letters, whose fibre is the most fine and attenuated, as of breath without resonance. Thus in *smooth, soothe, breathe, feathery, Lethean, muffled, smothered, far, faint, forgetful, Sabbath, suffocate, froth, stuff, muff, whiff*, etc.

“The effusive South
 Warms the wide air, and o’er the vault of heaven
Breathes the big clouds, with vernal showers distant.
 At first a dusky *wreath* they seem to rise,
 Scarce staining *ether*.”

“Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
 Her watery labyrinth.”

g, l, and r.—These are the giant consonants, expressive of unquestionable and unequivocal power. There is no humor, chaff, or nonsense about them, and “baby talk” excludes them. Each has a distinct force, which yet is most effective in union with one of the others. *G* is the hard letter, *r* is the rough and vibratory letter, and *l* is the chilling and polishing letter. Thus *gr* gives the hard roughness to *grit, grate, grind, grained, gravel, grim, grudge, growl, groan, grunt*, etc., while *gl* is effective in *glass, glary, glide*, etc. *R* by itself is strong in *bur, mar, blur, scar, rude, roar, rush, writhe, scour, crisp, fry, fritter, fragment, broken, gnarled, burly, torrent*, etc., etc.

“The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.”

“The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls.”

“The crispèd brooks,” says Milton, and a hundred poets after him.

“Though the ocean’s inmost heart be pure,
 Yet the salt fringe that daily licks the shore
 Is *gross* with sand.”

Foreknowing that *s* is the wet or moist letter, note how the brackish wash, the grit of the sand in the brine, is rendered in the word *gross* above. Tennyson, also, has a quick expression of this briny wash, where the sail-boat is said to “cut the shrill salt,” etc. But how dry and deep-carved is the figure following, of a sleeping poet :

“Dropt in my path like a great cup of gold,
 All rich and rough with stories of the gods.”

L, by itself, makes all *clear, cold, lucid, placid, liquid*; it is the polish of *glow, gleam, glide, glassy, glitter, glance*, etc. *Solid glass* is a clear expression. The *l* lends the cold, metallic quality to the solidity of *lead*; it gives lustre and ring to *silver*, as the *r* roughens and darkens *iron*. *L* and *g* carry most of the metallic sounds: *ring, clang, jingle*, etc., etc. "Hear the sledges with their bells." For the little bells we have "the tintinnabulation that so musically swells."

k.—*K* must be taken into all account of fine sounds and lights, usually with *i* and *ă*; thus in *twinkle, tinkle, flicker, sparkle, crackle, link, chink, trickle*; so in fibrous attenuations: *nick, splick* (the quarryman's name for a chip of stone), *skin, skiff, skip, skim, skive, sketch*.

"How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night,
While the stars that over-sprinkle
All the heavens seem to twinkle
With a krystalline delight!"

This of Poe is comparatively cheap work, but the reader must detect in it the same instinct by which the far-seeing Tennyson makes the steeds in Tithonus

"—shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire."

"—e'er my steps
Forgot the barefoot feel of the clay world."

"Like scaled oarage of a keen, thin fish."

"—whose diapason whirls
The clanging constellations round the pole."

I cannot, of course, be sure that the general reader is with me at the insight of these fine distinctions, and I beg him to consider that I might well exchange my confidence in his mutual appreciation for a vindictive and scientific criticism, which should prove my positions out of the preferences (some might call them thieveries) of the poets themselves. Take these letters, *k* and *l*. Burns sang:

"Peggy, dear, the evening's clear,
Swift flies the skimming swallow."

Both Tennyson and Alexander Smith appropriate the *skimming swallow*. Or take the word *clanging*, quoted above. It first appears in the "Odyssey," applied to *geese*. Mr. Alexander Smith (who gave promise of poetry) grasped the situation as his own. He sings :

"Unto whose fens on midnights blue and cold
Long strings of geese come clanging from the stars."

Shelley, in "The Revolt of Islam," is so beset by this notion of clanging that he uses it twice :

"With clang of wings and scream the eagle passed."
"With clang of wings and scream the eagle flew."

In spite of this repetition, the Laureate *clangs* three times more : in "Locksley Hall" he "leads the clanging rookery home"; in "The Princess," "The leader wild swan in among the stars would clang it"; and again, in the same, "But I, an eagle, clang an eagle to the sphere." There may seem little apposition of *clanging* and mere flesh and feathers, according to the genius of the letters as herein assumed; but if one will consider *eagle* a hard word, for a hard, metallic bird, fit to fight a golden-scaled serpent in the air, then the clanging may come in with high poetical advantage. So midnight "blue and cold," with a glitter of crystal stars, and the yelling, and jangling, and mingling of geese, may find voice in *clanging*.

m.—This is the letter of dreamy murmur and monotony; *hum*, *rumble*, *moan* are onomatopoeic.

n.—All nations agree in saying *no*. There is hardly a language in the world in which *n* is not the chief element of negation. Plato makes *n* the sign of *inwardness* (as translated); intensity of withdrawal were better. It is a nasal sound, which is intensified by drawing up the muscles of contempt at the sides of the nose—as when we dwell upon *méan*, *snéaking*, *n-asty*.

p.—This letter shows the character I have given it in such words as *plump*, *lump*, *pulp*, *voluptuous*, *sleep*, *dump*, *ripe*, *lip*, *purple*.

q.—*Queer*, *questionable*, *quaint*, *quizzical*, *quip*, *quirk*, *quiddity*, *quillet*, *squeak*, *squeal*, *squeamish*, *squelch*, *qualm*, *quit*, *quash*, etc., show *q* as the organ of the whimsical and *outré*—the very opposite of *o*.

s.—*Moist, misty, nasty, sticky, steam, slip, slop, slush, dash, swash, drizzle*, all suggest water in its different stages; even *ice* is kept wet by the *c*. *Luscious, delicious, nutritious*, suggest juicy substances.

Sh, either initial or final, suggests moist confusion; thus, initially, we have *shiver, shatter, shake, shrivel, shrink, shred*; finally, we have *dash, clash, lash, thrash, swash, smash, trash, rush, gush, mush, slush*, etc.

“—the sun new risen

Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams.”

“The stars obtuse emit a shivered ray.”

“One showed an English home—gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient peace.”

v.—Perhaps one tenth of the words which begin with *v* have an element of vehemence: *vim, violence, victory, vanquish, velocity, vigor, vice, vengeance, villainy*.

W and *y* also have general emphasis.

z.—This is a dreamy letter, of hazy, mazy, dry confusion; a lazy, drowzy, dozing, furzy, dizzy, vizionary atmosphere attends it, in which the genius of Thomson delighted.

“A pleazing land of drowzy head it waz.”

PLATO'S ALPHABET.

a.—Size.

η.—Length.

δ. } Binding, detention in place.
τ. }

ι.—Motion; usually *ai* or *ei*.

λ.—Liquidity and polish.

γ.—Detention or fixity of liquid.

ν.—Inwardness, withdrawing.

ο.—Roundness.

ρ.—Roughness and vibration.

φ. }
ψ. } Wind, moisture, and confusion.
σ. }
ξ. }

VI.

ONTOLOGY: TIME: CAUSE: MOTION, THE PARADOX OF ACHILLES, ETC.

We have seen that difference, motion, size, etc., are not properties of things, but are relations existing only in contrasting intelligence. A thing cannot move in reference to itself, save as it goes to pieces and makes another of itself. Of two bodies that seem to have moved, neither has moved with reference to itself; with reference to the other, the other has moved; both these statements hold the motion to be only with reference to other, and intelligence is the other of both.—“So, with this motion before my very eyes, and the result of it apparent in the two bodies being nearer to each other than they were before, you affirm that these bodies have not moved?”—They have not moved, and they cannot move.—“This is nonsense.”—True enough.—“Well, has my mind moved?”—Possibly not.—“Has there been any motion at all?”—Possibly not.—“That is —— / nonsense. So, then, Achilles cannot overtake the tortoise?”—No; the necessity that he should first cover a half of the distance between himself and the tortoise, then a half of what remains, and so forever a half of a remainder, has never been confuted. The space is subjective, and has no sensuous measure.—“And when Achilles in plain flesh and blood lays his hand upon the tortoise, that is no proof?” None.—“And when Diogenes, in response to the thesis that matter cannot move, gets up and walks, this is no proof?” None; for look upon this picture, and on this: first the Achilles who would pursue the tortoise, then him who has the tortoise in hand: *the latter is an older man*; the tortoise has a tougher look, and all things in the surrounding world are different; in brief, *this is not the same world at all*. And the difference of one world from another is not a motion, neither is it a change in either world. The arrow in its flight may be in each instant stationary in the stuff and build of a different world. That which is different is other; it is not becoming other; and all change is difference of observation and relation.

“If there are no motion and no change in sensuous things, then nothing comes to be which before was not?”—No more can be than rationally is; and this was always true. There is no reason for what is not; but for what there is reason, that is and ever

was. Especially is there no becoming reason, and hence no reason for becoming to a sufficient intelligence.—“What, then, is the cause of a thing?”—The thing itself in reason. To say there is something yet to be which never was, even in the thought or the sufficient intelligence wherein the world is rational rather than a blind and orphan waif, is to ignore all reason. This is not saying there may not be novel sensuous demonstration to a local intelligence that has local sensuous limits of experience; but in the sufficient intelligence all things always are, and are rational. Aught that shall be assumed as contingently coming to be can have only freedom as its origin; and freedom has no fertility or invention, and is not a reason for any special thing, but the very vacuity of a tendency to or a ground for anything in preference to its room. Neither is there in time any principle or originality whereby aught should come of its process.

We understand by time, in its general aspect, the order of reason; in its particular aspect, the order of experience. The very nature of principle, as rational theoretical origin, evolves time in its practical explication. Principle is order and process to the particular intelligence; beginning and ending and becoming are items of particular intelligence—simple observation. An order or process begun in any quarter of reason becomes historical in the unity of a race. These evolutions are at once exhaustive and specific of the method of the principle; the totality implicated in all unity makes theoretically possible the connection of all experience in a single time process.

If we remove from reality the time element, then this of cause and effect will appear only a rational connection of phases in a certain order, over which local or partial intelligence may pass in any direction, making time. If now the reality were such independently of knowing, all things forever forefinished would be comparatively plausible and simple, and the present tense would be a subjective, personal, local, limited exploitation, held to a certain forward movement—due possibly to a practical thesis and antithesis comporting with the theoretical genesis whereby thought must find reality rational—and this process in consciousness would be time, harmonious with the theoretical evolution of the first principle; and while a whole race of men might advance abreast in one present tense, exploiting the conditions in a uniform growth

and decay, it would by no means follow that the eternal conditions or laws should be worn out or altered, but the same time and space might be used or made over and over again. But when, by the introduction of knowledge, we posit an element or a factor which has a part at least in the making of that reality (of things of which we may not say they are, save as they are known), the existence of the reality demands as eternally requisite the same exploitive thought whereby we posit it as being in a present tense, but which, as it seems to us, now has the duration of only our human mortal life. We should be eternal with the things we make and do, especially so far as the reality of any event involves our private pleasures and pains. An event in history, for instance, involves the private feelings of the actors, and takes its chief interest therefrom; how can the scene or event be either foreknown or remembered, or founded in the sufficient intelligence, save as the actors themselves are there in their parts? And of all things whatsoever it may be said that, without the present exploiting intelligence, the conditions (or the legal skeleton of things) are absolutely nothing, either for reason or conception. Whatever is implicit in reason must be coincidently explicit in time, or else idealism is vain.

“If the arrow in its flight is stationary in the build of a different world, how of two arrows, of which one is swifter than the other? We understand time here to take the place of motion; and by each instant having a new world, instead of the arrow moving, the swifter arrow must have more worlds, or else cover more space in the same time—and this would infer motion of the swifter arrow in each world in which the slower arrow is at rest. Or, again, if the slower arrow is at rest, how is it with an arrow that is not in flight at all, but at rest among other objects over which even the slower arrow is flying? is this arrow stiller than the still?”

We have held that motion is a subjective relation; a thing that is stationary among its fellows has fewer relations than one that seems to move; if the motion is subjective, the swiftness consists solely in a greater number of relations, or of relations to a greater number of things.

“If the Achilles who grasps the tortoise is a man different from him who first pursued it, what is the unity of will and purpose

which allows him to think himself the same man in the same world?"

The unity apparent in the exploiting of the conditions is consciousness concurrent with the theoretic genesis of all from the first principle—through which not only ought and all is, but is thus. This continuous identity of the individual is as the notion of bottom in a rolling wheel: the particle which represents it is ever yielding to another as the same. The individual is a single thought or glance. "Good thoughts in him" (as Socrates suggests) are referable only to the theorizing faculty of the race, and include many, doubtless, which are not formulated in our history.

"And between these worlds—what?"

Objective nothing. World and no world here mean only attention and rest—life and death.

"The explanation, then, is something equal to nothing: thanks accordingly!"

Hear yet the sigh of the Naamathite to Job: "That he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is." (Job xi, 6.) Hear also verse 16 of the 139th Psalm of David: "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

An alternative among three hypotheses is plainly before us.

1. All reality is in one common present tense, in which gods and men advance abreast; it is founded in freedom and contingent will.
2. The true objective universe is an invisible legal skeleton, like the multiplication-table, which is so for whomsoever finds it, and is locally exploited by limited intelligences, so making time.
3. Every moment and the contents of it are eternal, carrying the actors and their environment; a man is a single thought, and he is no more whole in a single instance than the whole world of thought of which he is generically capable is in his consciousness at once; what I shall be to-morrow I am to-morrow; what I was yesterday I am yesterday—not in an intelligence sufficient without me, but with me as now; Brutus stabs Cæsar in the capital now—then. So may the universe be rational—new in time and old in eternity; and a man in his career, though now, as immediately seen, the representative of a single thought—like a rocket,

which, seen at a single point, is but a squib and a stick—yet viewed continuously may appear an arch of fire.

The first hypothesis, which puts all reality into a present tense, yet theoretically makes an infinite past and future apprehensible in the same, turns this univarious noun into a participle—makes reason a process nowhere, and makes philosophy a method of discovering the method of +.

The second hypothesis—of a legal skeleton of conditions to be exploited like an old atlas, or a copy of the multiplication-table, so that time, like space, could be used over and over—takes the self-relation out of knowledge, and converts reason into mechanism.

The third hypothesis—that all things always are, together with the individual intelligences which their privacy and republican dignity require—calls (in common with the others) for an intelligence of the whole which is other than the intelligence of the parts, and which *makes* what to us seems simply *given*; like Falstaff dying, it “cries out of God”; and we can only answer with the knight’s nurse, “Now I, to comfort him, said ‘a should not think of God—that I hoped there was no occasion for such thoughts as yet.” But there *is* occasion, however urgent. Bravely may we live, and do battle with our peers; but we do not make a worthy end. Like bald-headed hawkers of an infallible hair-renewer, we demonstrate immortality and self-relation, and then die inconsequently. Sound enough at the centre, we are whirled into nothingness on the flying circumference; and the little that we know, however it may give us dignity and courage as against the errors and comparative ignorance of the past, we can but address it to the future with a courtesy more cosmopolitan than was that of our masters gone before—for they might graciously have said of themselves, what we must now say of both them and us: “We are ancients of the earth, and in the morning of the times.”